

My experiences as ADRM

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I have worked as ADRM for two and half years. Towards the end of my tenure, a thought came to my mind to write my experiences. This tenure gave me an opportunity to watch working of all departments from a neutral position.

Railway Fraternity is aware but other readers need to be introduced about job of ADRM. ADRM stands for Additional Divisional Railway Manager. In the divisional set up all the branches are headed by branch officers (BO). All branches are controlled by PHODs in headquarter and DRM in the division. Apart from daily monitoring of train punctuality and asset failures, main duties of ADRM are to deal with:

- ▶ Tenders
- ▶ D&AR appeals
- ▶ RTI appeals
- ▶ Selections, RRC/RRB exams
- ▶ Attending site of derailments on main line

Nowadays ADRM has been made nodal officer for

- ▶ Cleanliness
- ▶ Web complaints
- ▶ CPGRAM
- ▶ Monitoring of court cases

As far as my experience goes, ADRM fits into the role of Assistant DRM. By providing assistance to DRM, it helps him to concentrate on core matters. If DRM is on leave, ADRM coordinates and fully monitors the division. It is difficult to exercise authority for few days but it is expected that ADRM should take essential decisions.

Branch officers get directives from:-

- ▶ PHOD
- ▶ DRM
- ▶ ADRM

Already BOs are loaded so much with instruction from HQ and DRM that there is hardly any time & space for ADRM. Being second in command, there is little authority with ADRM. It depends upon DRMs support how much BO will comply to ADRM. It can be debated that there can not be two power centers at one place. However, there is more responsibility with DRM, as he has more authority.

So this set up puts a limitation on the initiatives ADRM can take. This is also true that nobody likes multiple bosses so to that extent BOs can not be blamed. Recently a letter has suggested that ADRMs should hold daily meeting like control meeting to monitor and resolve web complaints and CPGRAM. Already there are so many meetings in the division (punctuality, PNMs, informals, Rajbhasha etc) that adding more meetings is seen as waste of time. This situation can be appreciated by those who have worked in division.

ADRM can contribute significantly inspite of limitations discussed above. Some of the items which were successfully done are :

1. Quick decisions on Tenders
2. Interaction with media and publicity of good work done by Railway through All India Radio
3. Solving problems of retired personnel by meetings and Pension Adalats
4. Removing redundant and time consuming processes by sending proposals for revision in SOP to HQ.
5. Improvement in Running rooms
6. Educating all Station Superintendents about process to deal with proposals from NGOs, corporates wanting to augment passenger amenities.
7. Disposal of scrap lying with subordinate offices
8. Introducing one page formats for cleanliness inspections
9. Publicity of Railway helplines through posters
10. Providing white display boards at Enquiry counters giving information about special/holiday trains

I would like to share my observations about the working of various departments. I have tried to emphasize those aspects which need attention so that we can focus on further improvement. It may appear critical but does not imply that good work and improvement is not being done by various departments.

General

- ▶ There are lot of calls from unknown numbers to DRM, ADRM and branch officers. There must be one helpline for routine information. Passenger helplines such as 139, 138, 182 serve passengers. But there are queries from new recruits to personnel department; there are queries from public regarding concession to Handicapped persons to commercial department; there are queries about new electrical connection by a contractor to electrical department; there are queries about release of payment from employees and contractors to Accounts department; etc. General helpline should address these issues during daytime only.
- ▶ As compared to other Ministries and State governments, Protocol requirement in Railway is heavy. Every division must have protocol cum public relation officer and protocol inspectors who can take care of dignitaries visiting various stations. If DRM/ADRM move frequently for protocol some important work will suffer. Protocol officer can also function as public relation officer dealing with media. Nowadays newspaper edition of prominent newspapers are getting published from medium cities. Even city news channels are available who are eager to devote some time daily to Railway. Now job of PRO cannot be given to a commercial officer as per past practice. Let the commercial officer concentrate on improving earnings and leave the job of monitoring media and social media (twitter, facebook) to PRO.
- ▶ Cases of indiscipline are on the rise. Root cause of such incidences is increase in number of Union branches and heavy enrolment of Supervisors as office bearers. Earlier, Unions were worker oriented but now Supervisors are being lured in to protect them from periodical transfers. In MB division, there are 72 branches and more than 550 office bearers who are majority Gp. C. No exemption from periodical transfer must be given after 3-4 years.

- ▶ DRM/ADRM have lot of past experience, but in one department. One week training must be imparted covering important aspects to be monitored in all departments, especially safety. Important circulars can also be discussed. Special course can be designed.

Personnel

There is lot of file movement in personnel department, which can be reduced by revising schedule of powers. Some examples are-

- ▶ Approval of inter divisional & inter railway mutual transfers is given by HQ. Whereas if division has screened DAR/vigilance record & concerned branch has no objection then it should be processed directly.
- ▶ Proposals of Ex-gratia payments are sent to HQ. Delegation should be given to DRM for quick disposal. No of clerks can be reduced if processes are simplified.
- ▶ Electronic grievance redress system has been installed to acknowledge all the representations, letters etc. There is no segregation between actual grievance and routine letters. Secondly quality of reply needs improvement. As a result grievances are not coming down rather people are taking help of CPGRAM & RTI to solve their grievance. If EGRS is made for grievances only then real benefit can be derived.
- ▶ There are few complaints in Accounts and RPF as they deal with establishment themselves. Other departments can also do this. Personnel should only look after recruitment, HOER, general issues like staff welfare, issue of passes, policy issues etc.
- ▶ There is so much to write about process of settlement, working of WLIs, poor knowledge of clerks, no value addition by Chief OS/OS in any file etc. This article cannot deal all aspects.

Accounts:

There is only one complaint from employees that payments are not passed in time. Regular payments are made in time but other items suffer. Eg. Supplementary bills, Settlement of Death & VR cases. Department is not acknowledging receipt of bills, which is a must. For all proposals there should be standard formats giving full particulars so that it is concurred in one go. There are lot of delays in correcting some mistake in pension payment orders. There are lot of delays in transfer of PF accounts on transfer. Activity wise costing must be recorded to analyze our expenses correctly. It will help in correcting operating ratio.

Safety

To achieve target of zero accidents, following steps are essential

1. Inquiry must find the truth. For this safety department must conduct independent inquiry. Inquiry committee must not include divisional officers, who are responsible for maintenance.
2. Joint measurements must be on a standard proforma, which should mention standard values as well. Supervisors must be trained for this activity.
3. If work is to be done as laid down in the manuals, adequate manpower and infrastructure must be available. Otherwise we are encouraging shortcuts.
4. We know about retirements in advance so indents to be placed in time. RRB can start the process in advance and give the panel as soon as indent arrives. Instead of activity in series, it should be in parallel.

Engineering:

Officers are fully occupied with track maintenance. Works matters are getting little attention and planning. More supervisors & officers are required who can look after land cell & works matters. Similar to operating & commercial, two wings are required in engineering, Track & Works. Railway is loosing heavily due to encroachments. Digitization of land records will help but without adequate Manning and clear Responsibility results will not be commensurate. Time should

be the essence of contracts but there are long extensions beyond completion period are routine. DRMs should be given more funds to get urgent works done.

Electrical:

Electrification or any new asset should be created only when required manpower can be provided without delay. Field officer has to put in lot of time & effort to create infrastructure. Rather he should devote time to asset maintenance. Clear yardsticks for automatic creation must be available. In general services, lot of items are DGS&D items in which there are quality complaints but not getting resolved. As manpower cannot be increased, there should be fittings with either Low or No maintenance. Bad quality fittings only increase maintenance work load.

Mechanical:

Cleanliness in trains can only improve if OBHS is supervised by TTEs. Similarly adequate supervision is required at CTS locations. OBHS staff must report to TTE and supervisor to give his phone number. If no of cleanings in a day are not specified they clean only two times.

As far as crew management is concerned manual record keeping is not going away even after installation of CMS. There is lot of emphasis on running room inspections but work/proposals for major improvement are not sanctioned promptly. Adequate budget is not given to divisions to improve running rooms promptly. If loco pilot is willing, then 10 hour duty rule is breached as there is shortage of loco pilots.

S&T:

Lot of inputs have gone into this department eg improved inter locking and improved asset reliability. However full advantage of data logger reports has not been taken. Loco pilots complain of signals flying back to danger on approach. In case of lightning there are major failures. The track circuit protection is not effective against surges.

Operating:

After heavy investment in FOIS, COIS, all the information & reports are available online. Still HQ conducts long conferences 2-3 times daily. This leaves with divisional officers, little time to think and plan beyond routine matters. This department has become more & more HQ driven. Sometimes other branches of the division feel that operating is not part of the Team. Traffic inspectors are utilized more in protocol duties, leaving less time for rigorous inspections.

G&SR needs a fresh look as communication devices were not available when it was first written. Every communication between LP and SM, PWI and SM is in the form of written memos, which is time consuming. Nowadays communication can be quick with the help of mobile or any hand held device.

Commercial:

Officers and staff are not able to handle tenders promptly. All tenders are earning tenders so every delay causes loss of earning. eg Leasing of SLRs are high value tenders where retendering or any delay in process means direct loss. Catering has come back from IRCTC but infrastructure for delivering is still weak. Licensed vendors are much less than demand, so there is lot of scope for unauthorized vendors to flourish. Some of the base kitchens are below standard and in small area. Minimum standards must be enforced.

Medical:

Strength of doctors is reducing day by day. Stop gap arrangement is appointment of contract medical practitioners. But there is need of specialists. Every year the process of empaneling referral hospital is repeated. Major changes are required otherwise system is going to collapse. Either CGHS model or group health insurance has to be adopted. Employees are not satisfied.

Training

There is one common aspect among all departments that quality training is not available for maintenance supervisors and technicians. Except running categories, other departments' staff is overdue refresher. Officers also require refresher courses. Good training is essential to extract quality from staff and officers. Private institutions must be used for specialized training. For officers more focus is on managerial skills rather than core expertise. More assistance should be given to training institutes in terms of manpower and budget. Impression that training is for surplus management must be removed. More emphasis and resources must be given for core expertise rather than management trainings. Foreign training also encourages officers to think big.

Conclusion

I may look very critical but we cannot be complacent. We have to do continuous improvement in all fields as there is nothing which cannot be improved. More important is the speed at which we do it to reap the benefits.



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